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MONTHLY REPORT FEBUARY 2018

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- On February 1, the Shellfish Dept. opened the inside area of Duck Creek behind the slips on the back of the pier. Background:
 - This area had been closed in 2011 as a “sanctuary” as part of a nitrogen mitigation cultching project that ended in 2013 and proved that oysters set in large numbers on the cultch and helped remove nitrogen from the water.
 - During the third winter it was closed, it experienced an oyster die off due to winter weather which brought mud that smothered the oysters.
 - Mass. statutes do not allow for public fishing areas to be closed for more than three years, but this area was never reopened.
 - Given upcoming dredging, the department decided it wanted to open the area so as not to lose the shellfishing opportunities present.
 - We brought it to the Shellfish Advisory Committee for review and input. The board agreed with our assessment to open the area.
 - The area opened February 1 and will close with the rest of Duck Creek on April 30.
 - There has been some modest fishing effort documented for both oysters and quahogs.
- Commercial shellfishing has been very active with up to 20 people fishing each day. Recreational shellfishing has been slow.

Enforcement

- Spot size compliance checks continued with wild commercial harvesters with one six-percent infraction; written report filed; warning, no ticket. Verbal education was shared with harvesters about tagging product before it leaves the flats and not sharing catch with other permit holders.
- Sixty grant holders attended the February 6 overwintering agreement meeting. The early arrival of ice and its repercussions were discussed. Consensus about next steps was reached by voting.
 - The industry decided that: (1) All rigid and metal gear should be tagged, to include racks, condos and oyster grow bags. (2) All should be tagged by May 1 for spring grant inspections. (3) Individual work plans will be made when necessary.
 - The Shellfish Dept. issued written warnings to all those who were late with their overwintering agreements and to those who were noncompliant, and these will be placed in their files. If next season’s agreements are turned in before the ice or the deadline date (whichever comes first), these warnings will be destroyed.
 - The Shellfish Advisory Board will review language/dates in overwintering agreement.
- A complaint was made by a grant lease holder about a boat fishing on grant. Department is monitoring the situation.
- A recreational harvester was stopped for fishing without a license. Product was returned to flats. Another was informed that not allowed to bring vehicle on the beach.
- A new boat owner was educated about no dragging areas north of no drag line and inside Indian Neck recreational area. Maps were given and regulations discussed in depth.

State and Town Relations

- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta and Deputy Shellfish Constable Chris Manulla attended a CPR/First Aid class given by Fishing Partnership Support Services.
- The Board of Selectmen approved a thank you letter to SPAT for its \$12,000 donation to the department’s propagation budget. It took no action on a recreational shellfishing tax insert.

- The Constable met with the outgoing Asst. Town Administrator about implementing the town's Local Comprehensive Plan workshop with the shellfishing community.
- Assistant Constable conducted water sampling with the state biologist.

Propagation

- Deputy Constable attended an AmeriCorps RFP meeting. We provided an Individual Work Placement proposal for our propagation program to the Health and Conservation agent for inclusion in a proposal for two shared AmeriCorps placements for 2018.

Education & Outreach

- The department held an early beach clean-up day to pick up aquaculture gear that got strewn about the harbor due to the ice. A half dozen farmers and a wild commercial fisherman showed up to help and about four pick up truck loads of gear were removed.
- One Shellfish Crier was distributed.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable